

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Community Nutrition Programs
Child and Adult Care Food Program

Guidance Memorandum P: For Sponsoring Organizations of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in Day Care Homes

Topic: Household Contacts

Date: March 2005

Household contacts provide a means of confirming children's enrollment and attendance in the day care home, which is critical to ensuring the integrity of the monthly CACFP meal reimbursement claim. A household contact is defined as: "a contact made by a sponsoring organization or a State agency to an adult member of a household with a child in a family day care home or a child care center in order to verify the attendance and enrollment of the child and the specific meal service(s) which the child routinely receives while in care" (7 CFR 226.2). In order to be effective the household contact system must help to detect the existence of inflated facility meal counts.

The following household contact system must be adhered to by all sponsoring organizations as part of the review and oversight of participating day care homes:

- 1) When unusual claiming and/or Program participation patterns are detected within a given federal fiscal year (October 1 – September 30), the sponsoring organization must attempt to contact all the households of children in care (not including family day care providers' households when their children are in care) for the purpose of verifying their children's enrollment and attendance and the specific meal service(s) which these children received while in care during the test month. The test month will include 1 to 4 weeks of Program activity, but will be restricted to one claiming month.

Unusual claiming and/or Program participation patterns are defined as:

- a) Home monitor concerns questioning the validity of the enrollment, attendance and/or meal service participation of children in care;
 - b) Written parent/guardian concerns regarding child enrollment, attendance and/or meal service participation in the day care home;
 - c) Any other claiming pattern(s) and/or Program participation concern(s) as defined by the sponsoring organization.
- 2) A household contact cover letter and form must be sent to the family of each enrolled child. The form must document, for the test month, whether each child was enrolled in the day care home, the days each child attended the day care home, and the meals each child received while in care at the day care home. Each household must be instructed to complete the form and return it to the sponsoring organization within two (2) weeks from receipt of the letter from the sponsoring organization.
 - 3) The initial household contact must be in writing, with additional attempts being made by phone, in writing or in person, as decided by the sponsoring organization. The number of additional follow-up attempts to be made is the decision of the sponsoring organization.
 - 4) No more than 45 days may elapse from the start of the household contact procedure (date the letters were originally sent to the households) to the closeout of the procedure. At the end of the 45 day period the sponsoring organization must determine whether the household contact procedure has been successful, as defined under #5 below.
 - 5) A return/contact rate of 50% or more of the surveyed households will be considered successful.

- 6) If contact can not be made with at least one-half of the selected households, meaning the household contact procedure has been determined by the sponsoring organization as not successful, the sponsoring organization may take steps to declare the day care home provider seriously deficient in its operation of the CACFP. However, an unsuccessful household contact will not necessarily result in declaring a day care home provider seriously deficient. A household contact is one of many meaningful tools available to the sponsoring organization when it needs to examine questions raised by an onsite monitoring review or by a review of a claim. If the household contact procedure has not been successful, as defined above, the sponsoring organization may use other approaches (additional unannounced reviews, more detailed review(s) of claims history, etc.) to investigate and explain the Program concern(s) that was triggered by a review or a claim, rather than immediately declaring the day care home provider seriously deficient. Regardless of the tool(s) used the sponsoring organization must document all subsequent action(s) taken in response to an unsuccessful household contact.

If an unannounced review is conducted in response to a household contact, a complete home visit must be conducted and documented, in order for this unannounced visit to be counted towards one of the three required yearly home monitoring reviews. If the provider is not at home at the time of this unannounced review, the provider and the sponsoring organization will develop a plan of action (Improvement Plan, IP) based on the sponsoring organization's policy. If the provider fails to complete the IP then the provider will be declared seriously deficient.

- 7) For all household contacts, successful and unsuccessful, the sponsoring organization may establish their own written policies and procedures regarding current and future CACFP claims for reimbursement for meals served to enrolled children of the day care home.